

SEPTEMBER EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

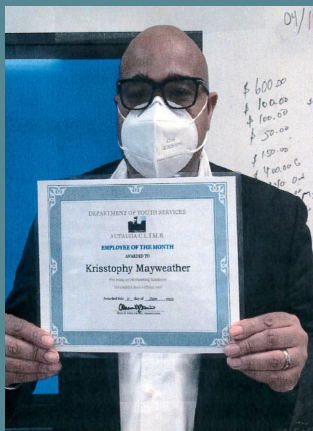
MT. MEIGS CAMPUS

Mr. Gill Smith



AUTAUGA CAMPUS

**Mr. Krisstophy
Mayweather**



VACCA CAMPUS

Mr. Joseph Woodie



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH SERVICES

October 2021 Newsletter

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Coaches and Referees

Many of us who grew up loving and playing sports have all had interactions with these important adults in our lives. Some of you may very well still participate in youth sports as a coach or referee. Before I started at DHS, I umpired softball 7 years for the City of Montgomery. When we look back on our lives, most of us can remember a special coach or two. Nobody remembers referees.

The two roles are essential for youth to develop their potential and then play the game fairly against an opponent or team. However, we only remember our coaches. Why is that? Well, for many of us, aside from our teachers, a coach was the first adult who was interested in taking us where we were at the time and developing our skills and interest for the game. Not just the physical skills, but our mental abilities to cope with stress, anxiety, fear, adversity, and success. Coaches, like our parent(s), were adults, who were interested and invested in us becoming better and growing in maturity. Some coaches may have been a parental surrogate for a time in our lives. That is why we remember coaches.

Ironically, it is the goal of referees to *not* be remembered. When we remember referees, it usually means their call was controversial and probably affected the game. A referee knows all the rules of the game but is dispassionate and not interested in getting to know the players. They watch for rule violations and assess the pre-determined corresponding penalties. They are not interested in the score, the team's record, or if individual players have improved their game in any way.

This analogy has a lot to offer those of us who work with young people. No matter what our title or position in the organization is, if we approached our work more like coaches rather than referees, we would be more successful and I believe our youth would be as well. A good coach knows does not abandon discipline, because done the right way, it is ultimately good for the youth and the team. However, a good coach knows what approach to use to get the most out of their players and when some players may need a little more attention. We have multiple opportunities each day to "coach-up" the youth in our custody. There is a mutual benefit. As a professional, there is satisfaction knowing your efforts have made a difference for a student while they were with us. For our students, they may leave with a lifelong memory of another adult who was invested in them and their potential.

As we watch our football games this Fall we can ask ourselves this question.

Would I rather be a Coach or a Referee?

In appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Steven P. Lafreniere".

Steven Lafreniere

DYS Highlights



Congratulations to Ms. Starr Weaver! DYS Employee of the Quarter



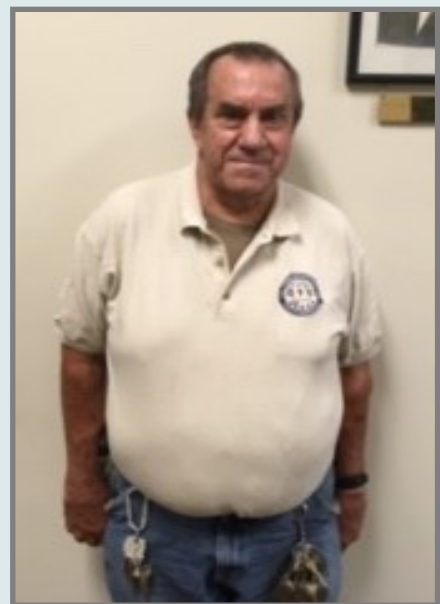
DYS would like to congratulate Ms. Starr Weaver for being selected as the DYS Employee of the Quarter. "Ms. Weaver is a 15-year veteran with DYS and was recently promoted to Youth Services Senior Aide. Ms. Weaver has been dedicated to the rehabilitation of the students we serve in her role as a Focus Team member. Ms. Weaver works diligently in the implementation of CARE/TCI. Ms. Weaver has proven to be a valuable asset to all concerned by assisting in the Snack Shack to maintain and build relationships with the students. Ms. Weaver maintains a strong open line effort of cooperation with her fellow co-workers and other staff members. Ms. Weaver does an outstanding job in her work with the students and has earned their respect by being fair, firm, consistent, and positive in her individual approach with each situation she faces. Ms. Weaver has a genuine concern for the success and betterment of all students. She gives 100 percent every day she reports to work." - Nominated by Ms. Paulette Underwood



Remembering Mr. Gordon Lancaster

It is with great sadness that DYS announces the passing of Mr. Gordon Lancaster. Mr. Lancaster was the Plant Maintenance Worker for the Vacca Campus. Mr. Lancaster was an employee with DYS for twenty years and was a state employee for a total of 35 1/2 years. Mr. Lancaster was employee of the month for the Vacca Campus in September, 2020.

Mr. Lancaster was from Center Point, AL and passed away on September 13th at UAB Hospital in Birmingham, AL. Graveside services were held on Saturday, September 25th at the Union Hill Freewill Baptist Church Cemetery in Reform, AL. Mr. Lancaster was born in Bangor, Maine, was a graduate of Shelton State, a member of Huffman Baptist Church, and a veteran of the United States Army.



DYS Highlights

Vacca Campus Hosts Back to School Bash



On Friday, September 10, the Vacca Campus held a Back to School Bash for the kids. The campus provided a water slide that was age appropriate (with water shoes). The Vacca Campus also provided a dunk tank and an inflatable basketball game. Lunch was catered by Bayles, which included a 6 inch sub sandwich of choice (ham, turkey, or roast beef), chips, and cookies. The Vacca Campus would like to thank Mrs. Pike and Ms. Fairman for dividing and separating the lunches to make lunch an easy transition. A special thank you to Mr. Thomas, Mr. Givens, and Mrs. Freeman for assisting Ms. Mount in supervising the kids and ensuring they were on task. Ms. Mount was approached by several youth that were overly expressive with thank you's and gratitude. This made her day! "I really appreciate each and

every one of you, especially Mrs. Freeman for going down the water slide. To top things off, there were NO ISSUES or any misbehavior during this time. I could not have pulled this off without your help and support. AGAIN, thank you VACCA!" - Ms. Janna Mount. *Thank you Ms. Mount for providing DYS with an update and for coordinating this fun event!*

October is PbS Data Collection Month!

October 2021 data collection will begin on Friday, October 1st. Please remember the following as we go through our data collection month.

Youth Records – During the month of October please submit all youth records no more than three days after the student's release.

Incident Reports- Please submit all incident reports within 24 hours of the incident with supporting documentation. Make sure all required documentation is attached to the Initial Debriefing.

Youth and Staff Climate Surveys – We will do our best to collect surveys from as many students and staff as possible.

Unit Logs – Each unit is required to complete a full weeks unit log. Please make sure each units completes a practice week prior to that week.



DYS Staff Attend Annual PbS Awards Banquet

DYS staff participated in the annual PbS Awards Banquet held on Friday, August 13th in Nashville, TN. While in Nashville, Mr. Steve Lafreniere attended the Council on Juvenile Justice Administrator's summer business meeting, Dr. Shannon Weston attended the annual PbS State Coordinator's Training, and Ms. Lisa Williams, Ms. Marique Ruffin, Ms. Angie Toney, and Dr. Fatima Johnson participated in the American Correctional Association's annual conference.

DYS Highlights

Vacca's Tip of the Week!

"I'm excited about the opportunity to see the progress we've made and gain insight about things we can do to improve the services we provide to our youth. We play an important part in getting youth back on track and our work matters! It's essential that we work together as a team to reach our goals." - Dr. Fatima Johnson



Performance Based Standards (PBS) is not something else that we do. PBS...

- ... is not "more work," the principles of PBS reflect our policies & procedures
- ... is a tool we use to identify areas of improvement
- ... provides a way to gather data to track our progress on goals
- ... allows youth & families to understand ways we provide them support & assistance
- ... ensures we maintain a safe environment & address students' & staffs' concerns

Vacca's Facility Improvement Plan

♦ Goal— reducing assaults, fights, and use of restraints

Things you can do:

- *build relationships with students*
- *keep students active*
- *be attentive to changes in students' behaviors*
- *provide extra support for students that may be struggling*
- *provide rewards for positive behavior*

♦ Goal- improving documentation and accuracy of reporting

Things you can do:

- *report safety concerns & incidents to the AOD immediately*
- *provide accurate details about incidents in verbal and written reports*
- *complete incident reports before the end of your shift*
- *attend training when requested*
- *participate in critical incident debriefings*